GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3822
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2016
Women Representation in PRIs
Shewale Shri Rahul Ramesh

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

a) whether the representation of elected women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have increased in the country during each of the last three years and the current year, if so, the details thereof;
b) the extent to which the issues of drinking water, sanitation and adverse child sex ratio are addressed through the representation of elected women in PRIs across the country;
c) whether the Government has conducted any study to ascertain the impact of women's representation in PRIs on their socio-economic condition and awareness, if so, the details and outcome thereof; and
d) the other steps taken by the Government to ensure adequate representation of women in PRIs across the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
(SHRI PARSHOTTAM
RUPALA)
(a): In terms of Article 243D of the Constitution, not less than one-third seats of total number of seats filled by direct election in every panchayat and of the total number of offices of chairpersons in panchayats are reserved for Women. However, 19 states have made provisions for reservation of one-half seats of the total number of seats for women in Panchayats. The representation of women in Panchayats is dynamic and depends on the reservation policy of state and number of women winning the elections, etc. As such year-wise information on elected women representatives is not maintained by the Ministry. As per the information received from the States/UTs, there are about 14.41 lakh Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) including women sarpanches in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). A statement showing number of EWRs is at Annexe.

(b) & (c): A nationwide study on EWRs in Panchayats commissioned by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) was published in 2008. The study assessed the empowerment of EWRs in various aspects including enhancement of the self-esteem, confidence and decision making abilities of EWRs. The study indicated that the participation of women in Gram Sabhas had increased, and that attention was being given to women related issues such as drinking water, sanitation and child−sex ratio. The study reported that EWRs had made efforts to encourage girls' enrolment in schools and to mitigate domestic violence. Besides, the issues concerning women and children including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to women, sanitation and children are likely to be given focussed attention with the women taking over leadership at local levels.

(d): Article 243D of the Constitution ensures participation of women in PRIs by mandating not less than one-third reservations for women in seats and of the offices of chairpersons in Panchayats. Government has been encouraging increased involvement of the women in the functioning of Panchayats through active participation in the Gram Sabha meetings for preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans and various schemes being implemented by the Panchayats. MoPR has also issued advisories to the States to facilitate holding of separate ward sabha and mahila sabha meetings prior to gram sabha meetings, enhancing the presence and participation of women in Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings and to curb the cases of proxy attendance by relatives of EWRs.
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